

June 26, 2015

Dear George,

At a recent, June 16, 2015, National Hunter & Jumper Association Board of Directors conference call, the entire board in attendance voted unanimously to oppose H/J 207.17.

Now that we have completed just over one-half of the show season it is abundantly clear that numerous premiere shows have been negatively impacted by the significant expense related to the scoreboard and operator requirement to maintain the premiere rating.

A scoreboard clearly does not improve the quality of the competition and is a significant cost that, in most cases, must be passed on to the exhibitor.

Many traditional once a year shows (some are Heritage Award events) rely on local community support and do not have a large spectator base or large corporate presence. These events, many of which have celebrated 40, 50, 75, and even 100 or more anniversaries have survived decades of rising costs through the generosity of local community support. Sponsorships of a class, a division, a trophy, a cooler, an exhibitor pizza party, or an ice cream party for the juniors are conceivable, but a large sponsorship of \$6,000 or more for a scoreboard and operator is highly unlikely. For a small local exposure this money is much better spent on things to improve the facility to benefit the welfare of the horses, the footing, stabling, better awards, and/or increased prize money, all of which benefit the exhibitor.

Throughout the United States there are numerous annual events with top competition year after year which are not improved by the scoreboard/operator requirement. In fact, some show grounds with a country atmosphere, and an historic feeling, do not lend themselves to the installation of a large electronic scoreboard. It simply looks out of place in that type of setting.

Horse shows have many necessary large expenses for stabling, staff, ribbons, prize money, etc., which benefits owners, trainers, horses, riders, and exhibitors and do not need additional expenses which are of no benefit to the above. The scoreboard/operator is a financial hardship that many shows simply cannot bear.

Please consider allowing show committees and show managers to use their knowledge of their show and market base to present the best possible event for their customers, exhibitors, and community, so that all will leave the show having had a pleasant and fulfilling experience.

When the USEF downgrades a horse show, the perception to the public is that the show wasn't good and/or did something wrong and is being punished. It implies failure and losing your rating is certainly not in the best interest of the competition or the supporters of that competition. Losing your rating simply because of a lack of an electronic scoreboard is not a good reflection on our sport.

Show committees and managers who might have a significant spectator or sponsorship exposure may certainly choose to rent a scoreboard and operator. Please make H/J 207.17 a choice rather than a requirement.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sherry L.K. Robertson
President, NHJA